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A TYRRHENIAN AMPHORA IN PHILADELPHIA

IN 1896 the Free Museum of Science and Art of the University of Pennsylvania acquired a small number of Greek vases which had once formed part of the collection of Tewfik Pasha, Khedive of Egypt. Among these was a vase of the type known as Tyrrhenian amphorae which is interesting because of two of the scenes depicted upon it. The vase has the usual shape of the Tyrrhenian amphora; that is, it is rather slender, with handles extending from the body of the vase half way up the neck. It has the echinus-shaped lip and the style of decoration in zones typical of vases of this class (Fig. 1).

The height of this specimen is 38.5 cm.; the diameter of the top 15 cm., and that of the base 11.7 cm. Below the lip, which is painted black, there is a complicated ornament of a palmette pattern similar to one represented by Thiersch,¹ but not quite identical. The outline is the same, but in the vase in Philadelphia the pattern is scratched in upon a black background, whereas in

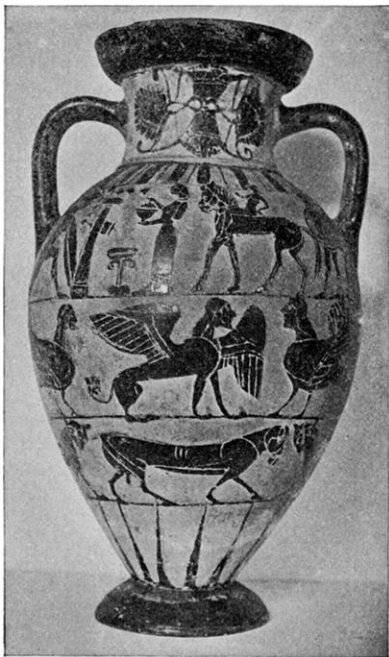


FIGURE 1.—AMPHORA IN PHILADELPHIA.

¹ *Tyrrhenische Vasen*, p. 83.

the example just mentioned red was used to bring out the design. Thiersch has pointed out that a mixture of the palmette cross of the Chalcidian style and the lotus cross of the Corinthian style is typical of vases of this kind; and they all have some ornament similar to this on the neck. Below this is a band of tongue-pattern 2.5 cm. high such as is found on all Tyrrhenian amphorae, and below this three zones of painted decoration. Again, below these zones is a band of ray ornament 6.8 cm. high, also characteristic of this style of vase, and still farther down the usual black foot.

The three bands of figures put this vase into Thiersch's third class, which, he has shown, does not go so far back nor last so long as the class with two zones. The size, too, corresponds well with the size established for this class, which varies from 38 to 44 cm. in height. If lack of skill on the part of the artist is a token of age in Tyrrhenian amphorae our vase must be regarded as one of the earlier examples. Its decoration is crude, no other color than black is used, and the detail is scratched in. The clay is soft and rather coarse, without glaze, and is light pink in color, and the figures project slightly from the background as though it had been scraped away after the paint had been applied. This may have been done in part at least in modern times.

The most interesting of the three zones of figures is the one at the top, which is 8 cm. wide. This has on one side a representation of the Troilus story (Fig. 2). To the left is Achilles concealed by the vine which grows about the fountain. He is on the point of starting forward. In his right hand he brandishes a spear, only part of which is seen, while on his left arm he carries a large round shield, the usual form on vases of this style. He wears a helmet with a crest, and likewise greaves, which is exceptional. The fountain is represented, as on other vases upon which this scene appears, as a sort of column with a spout on one side from which the water is supposed to flow. In some examples the water is actually depicted flowing from the spout (cf. Fig. 3). In front of the fountain is a stand, upon which the water jars were rested while they were being filled, and through which the waste water probably passed. On a vase in Vienna (Fig. 3) published in the *Annali del Insti-*



FIGURE 2. — ACHILLES AND TROILUS.

tuto, 1866, Tav. d'agg. R.,¹ there is a stand of almost identical form. In front of the stand and approaching it is Polyxena. She holds in her two hands what is evidently intended for a hydria adorned with bands. The absence of handles on the jar must be due to the crudeness of the drawing. At first one might imagine that the artist wished to represent some kind of covered vessel, but it is more likely that the broad band is merely intended for decoration. Polyxena has one hand on the mouth or neck of the jar and the other under the base. She has a sort of kerkchief about her forehead and coming down over her neck. Part of the chiton is indicated, and below there is an elaborate border on the skirt. This

¹ Cf. Masner, *Die Sammlung antiker Vasen und Terracotten im oesterreichischen Museum*, No. 221.

consists of two rows of rather large dots, a kind of ornamentation found on other Tyrrhenian vases, but not elsewhere, I think, as a border for a garment. Behind Polyxena is Troilus, represented as a nude youth on horseback. He has his hair tied up in a bunch at the back of his head (cf. Fig. 3), perhaps in the

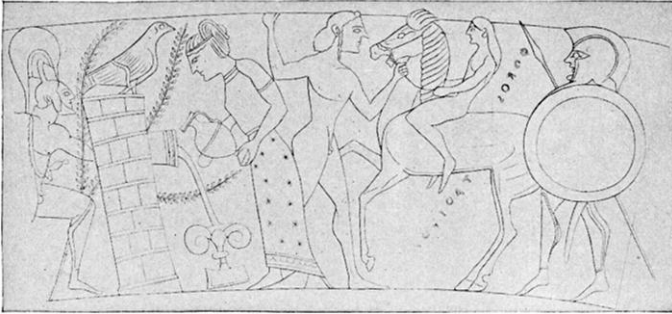


FIGURE 3.—FROM A VASE IN VIENNA.

κρωβύλος. The horse has a rather elaborate bridle. Behind Troilus are two warriors armed with helmets, shields, and greaves. The identification of this scene is made certain by comparing it with the plate in the *Annali del Istituto* just referred to, where, beneath the figure on horseback, is the name ΤΩΛΙΟΥΤ. It is needless to discuss the drawing. Its defects are apparent and are the same which are found on other vases of this class. The crouching Achilles is nearly twice as tall as the other figures, horse and all. The artist, too, has not succeeded in keeping all his figures within bounds, for the handle of the spear of Achilles, the head of Troilus, part of the head of the horse, and part of the helmets of the warriors project into the border above.

The scene depicted here is not an uncommon one in Greek vase painting. Schneider¹ enumerates twelve vases upon which it occurs, and according to Baumeister² there are as many as sixteen. Three of these are Tyrrhenian amphorae. More numerous still are the vases upon which the pursuit and death of Troilus are represented. This story formed one of the episodes in the *Cypria*, but almost nothing of it has

¹ *Der troische Sagenkreis*, p. 114.

² *Denkmäler des klass. Altertums*, p. 1900.

come down in the literature. Sophocles wrote a tragedy called *Troilus*, but nothing more is known about it than that in it he told how Troilus while exercising his horses was ambushed by Achilles and killed near the temple of Thymbrian Apollo.¹ In the *Iliad* Priam refers to his son Troilus *ἵππιόχαρμης*, *delighting in horses*, as having died in battle, and the other references in ancient literature give us little more information. But the whole story may be reconstructed from the vases. It was apparently this: Polyxena goes to the fountain outside the walls to fill her water jar. The boy Troilus goes along, too, partially as an escort, though hardly as a protection, for he is unarmed, and partially to water his horse. Achilles, who is lying in wait behind the fountain, rushes out and pursues Troilus to the temple of Apollo, where he slays him before Hector and his other brothers can come to the rescue. There are variants at almost every step in the story, but this must have been essentially the form in which the story appeared in the *Cypria*.

One might perhaps ask whether the artist who painted our vase had any definite heroes in mind for the two warriors at the right, and whether it is possible to identify them. On the vase in Vienna (Fig. 3) there is a warrior who has his name, Phocus, beside him; and on another two old men are standing by, one of whom is named Priam.² But it seems more likely that the artist had no particular heroes in mind and that these warriors are part of the escort of Troilus and Polyxena. The representation of Troilus as a boy accords with most of the other vases, though sometimes he appears bearded.³ One feature which does not appear on the vase in Philadelphia is the bird sent by Apollo, which is sometimes perched on the fountain, and sometimes flying towards Troilus

¹ Schol. to *Il.* XXIV, 257, quoted by Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Frag.* p. 212, ἐντεύθεν Σοφοκλῆς ἐν Τροίλῳ φησὶν αὐτὸν λοχευθῆναι (Klein; codd. δχευθῆναι) ὑπὸ Ἀχιλλέως ἵππους γυμνάζοντα παρὰ τὸ Θυμβραῖον καὶ ἀποθανεῖν. Eustathius, *Il.* p. 1348, 23, says, ὃν φασιν ἵππους ἐν τῷ Θυμβραίῳ γυμνάζοντα λόγχῃ πεσεῖν ὑπὸ Ἀχιλλέως.

² *Arch. Zeit.* 1863, pl. 175; cf. also Reinach, *Répertoire des vases peints*, I, p. 394.

³ Brit. Mus. hydria B 324; Gerhard, *Auserl. gr. Vasenbild.* pl. xcii; also a vase in Athens mentioned in the preceding note.

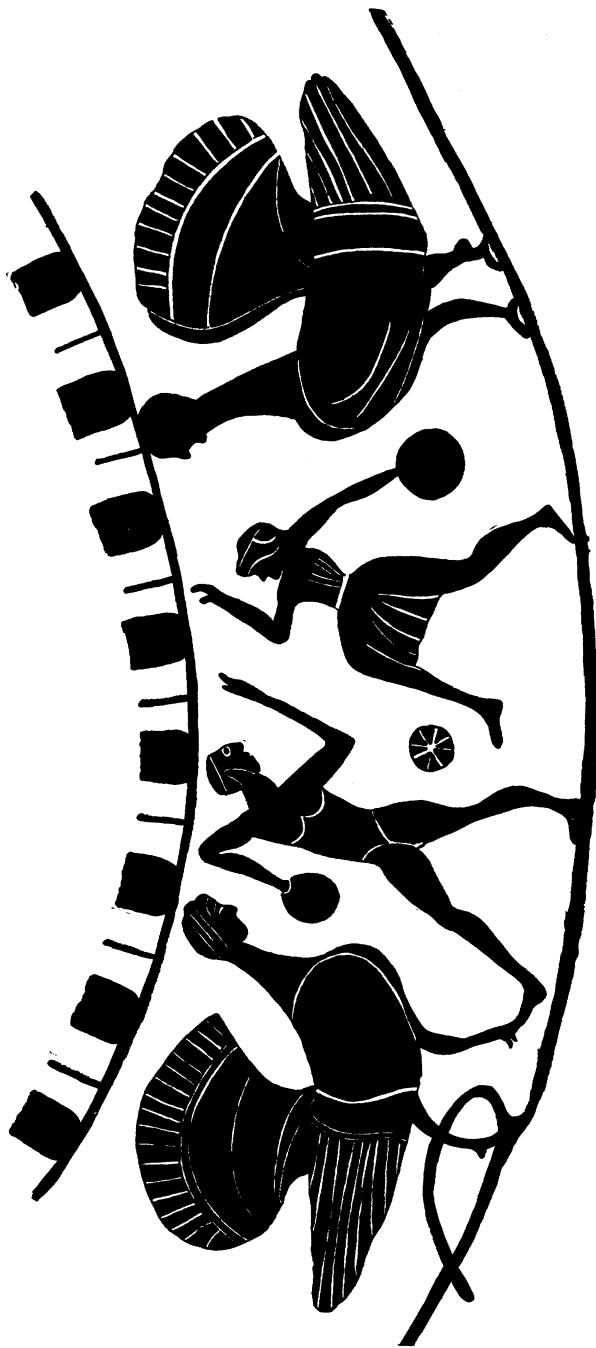


FIGURE 4. — THROWING THE DISCUS (?).

as if to warn him of the impending danger. The Troilus story is not found elsewhere exactly as it is painted here.

On the other side of the vase, in the same zone, is a peculiar group consisting of two human figures standing between two sirens and apparently engaged in some sort of contest (Fig. 4). The figure at the right wears a short chiton and evidently a cap of some sort. It is impossible to say what the sex of the figure is, but the artist presumably intended it for a man. He is advancing to the left as if at a run, with one hand in the air, while the other holds a circular object below and behind him. At first sight the hand in the air seems to be the right hand, but it is more likely that this is the left and that the hand holding the circular object is the right. Lack of skill on the part of the artist prevented him from distinguishing clearly right from left. The other figure seems to be nude. The line near the top of the head may indicate a cap, or may be intended by the artist for a band about the hair. The detail just below must be intended for the ear. This man also is advancing to the left, but looking back at the other man. He is gesticulating with his left hand, which is raised, while in his right hand he, too, holds a circular object. Between the two men, in the middle of the field, is another round object with a decoration consisting of four lines crossing in the middle.

No such scene as this occurs elsewhere on a Greek vase, so far as I have been able to discover, and one may well speculate as to what the artist wished to portray. At first sight one might think of some kind of boxing contest in which the figure at the right is about to deal the other a furious blow. But this interpretation is impossible because on another amphora of this style there is a boxing match represented and the contestants have their hands tied up and are standing in the traditional manner.¹ Again, one might think of some kind of ball game or tennis match in which the object between the two men would be the ball, but this, too, seems unlikely. Rosettes are common in the field in vases of this class, and it seems natural to regard this as such a rosette. One very similar appears at the end of the sphinx's tail in the zone below. Again, one

¹ Cf. Thiersch, *op. cit.* No. 19, and pl. ii.



FIGURE 5. — SIRENS AND SPHINX.

might think of some kind of dance,¹ but this would not explain the circular objects held by the two men. The true explanation is, I believe, that we have here two discus throwers about to engage in a contest. The man at the right is just starting at a run to get what momentum he can for the throw. The man at the left is looking back, watching him and waiting for his turn. It is true that neither of the figures has the traditional attitude of the discus thrower, but it may be that the artist meant to make the man at the right hold the discus in the usual way but was prevented by lack of skill from doing so.² If this interpretation is correct, this must be regarded as one of the earliest representations of the discus throw.

On either side of this group is a siren apparently with raised wings, although it is not easy to decide which the artist wishes us to con-

¹ This is the opinion of Professor Furtwängler, who saw the vase in 1904; cf. *Sitzb. Mün. Akad.* 1905, II, p. 256.

² Professor Marquand has suggested that this figure may be changing the discus from one hand to the other.

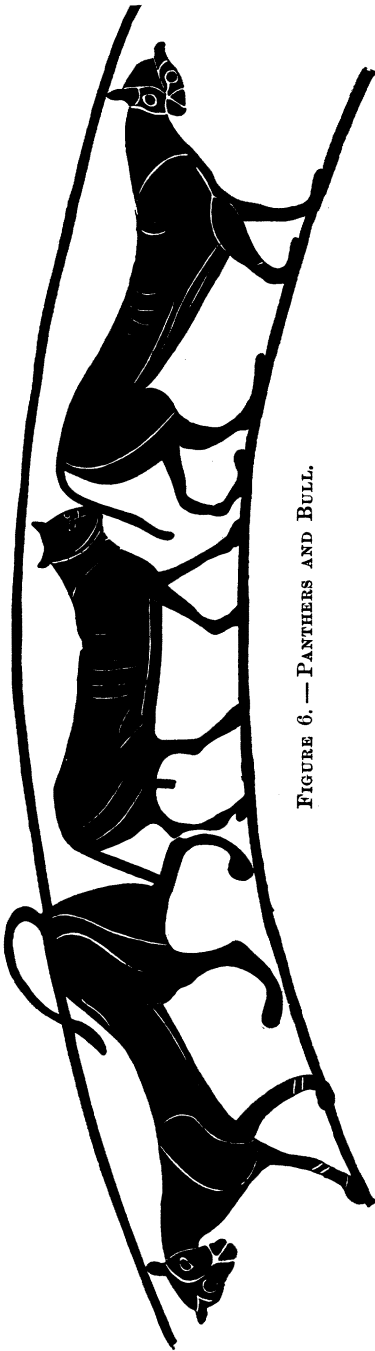


FIGURE 6. — PANTHERS AND BULL.

sider wings and which tail. The head of the siren at the right has been painted over, but this seems to be the only place on the vase which has been so treated.

Below this zone of figures comes a band of animals 7.2 cm. high arranged in two groups of three figures each, as is often the case in vases of this class. The group beneath the Troilus scene consists of two sirens between which is a bearded and winged sphinx (Fig. 5). There is nothing particularly remarkable about the sirens. The one at the right has its wings painted in the recurved fashion usual in early art and often found on these vases. The fact that the wings of the other siren and of the sphinx are not so painted shows that the artist knew better, but perhaps in this case preferred the older style for the sake of variety. The figure in the middle is quite exceptional. The sphinx is a common figure on Tyrrhenian amphorae, but not a bearded sphinx. Yet in this case there can be no doubt that the artist wished to depict a sphinx with a beard. The nearest analogy to this that I can find is a bearded siren on a Tyrrhenian amphora in Munich;¹

¹ Thiersch, *op. cit.* No. 47.

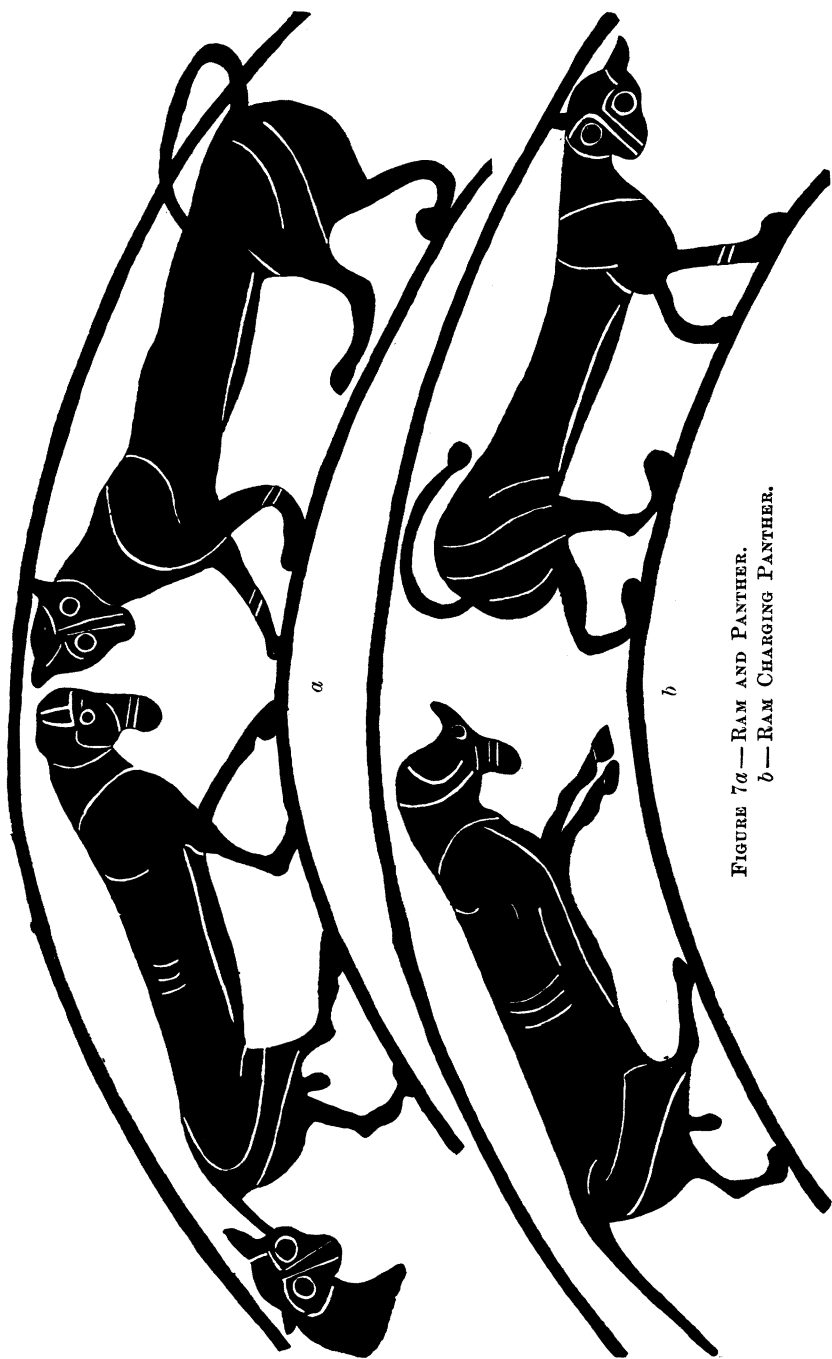


FIGURE 7a—RAM AND PANTHER.
b—RAM CHARGING PANTHER.

but the artist may perhaps have had some knowledge of the bearded sphinx of Egypt. The creature is also winged and has its wings extended, as frequently happens. Then the artist to give him additional beauty made his tail end in a rosette. This figure could not keep within bounds, as its hind legs encroach upon the zone below, and even its fore feet come a little below the line.

The other three animals are also interesting. There are two panthers moving in opposite directions and between them a bull facing to the right (Fig. 6). The panther is a very common animal on Tyrrhenian vases, in fact it is more frequently represented than any other animal and usually in the same elongated form as here. The bull is unusual. Thiersch can cite only one example, an amphora in Berlin.¹ There can be no question, I think, that the artist intended this animal for a bull. The tail of the panther at the left extends into the zone above.

The third zone, 6 cm. wide, also has two sets of animals. On what may be called the front of the vase are a ram and a panther face to face (Fig. 7*a*); and on the other side what seems to be a ram charging a panther (Fig. 7*b*). Like the panther the ram is often found on vases of this class. Neither of these groups deserves special comment. The panther in the first pair has a rather surprised expression, but the ram is perfectly stolid. In the second group the head of the charging ram is far from being true to nature.

The Tyrrhenian amphorae are an interesting class of vases. Their place of manufacture is still unknown, and unfortunately not enough information has been preserved about the vase in Philadelphia to throw any light upon this problem. The little group of vases of which it was one was said to have come from Samos and Chios,—a statement too uncertain to be of much value. All the extant specimens of which the history is known were found in Italy, chiefly at Caere and Vulci; but it is clear that they are not Etruscan. They have been called Attic;² Attic influenced by Corinthian;³ or by Boeotian;⁴ old

¹ Cf. *Monumenti del Inst.* IX, pl. 55, and Thiersch, *op. cit.* p. 107.

² Studniczka, *Jb. Arch. I.* 1886, p. 90, n. 17.

³ Pottier in Dumont and Chaplain, *Les céramiques*, etc., I, pp. 328 ff.; also Walters, *Cat. Gr. and Etr. Vases in Br. Mus.* II, p. 35.

⁴ Hauser, *Jb. Arch. I.* 1893, p. 93, pl. I.

Doric;¹ or Attic Ionic.² But Thiersch points out³ that the alphabet used in the inscriptions on these vases is not Corinthian, and that the shape of the vase, the type of decoration, the frequency of the Troilus myth, and a few other minor points all suggest Ionia as the place of manufacture. This conclusion may be safely accepted, although there is not sufficient evidence available at present to locate them more exactly. There are between seventy and eighty of these vases known. They are all closely connected, and Thiersch even argues that they are not merely the product of a single shop, but the work of one man. This, I think, is going too far. If the extant specimens form, as is likely, only a small proportion of the vases made, the original number must have been far more numerous than one man or one shop is likely to have turned out. But that they were made somewhere in Ionia within a comparatively short space of time is, I think, reasonably certain.

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¹ Wissowa, *Lexicon*, I, p. 1773, s. v. Amazones.

² De Ridder, *De ectypis quibusdam aeneis*, pp. 39 and 52.

³ *Op. cit.* pp. 19 ff.